

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2015 TESTIMONY FROM SOLARCONNECTICUT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHAEL TRAHAN IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED H.B. NO. 6435 AN ACT STREAMLINING THE PERMITTING PROCESS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS, AND PROPOSED S.B. NO. 730 AN ACT PROHIBITING HOMEOWNER OR CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATIONS FROM INTERFERING WITH OR PREVENTING INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEMS.

SolarConnecticut -- Connecticut's business association working exclusively with solar electric product makers, distributors, and installers -- strongly supports legislation that reduces consumer costs to generate clean electric power and protects consumer rights to install solar systems.

Reducing costs is especially important for the solar electric industry in Connecticut since electric ratepayers here continue to invest in the state's solar industry through a surcharge on electric bills. The more we can lower costs, the less reliant we need to be ratepayer incentives.

These incentives have produced remarkable success in bringing down installed costs. Currently, homeowners in Connecticut are installing solar electric systems 50-percent larger than systems installed three years ago, and pay 25-30 percent less than what homeowners were paying three years ago for those larger systems. 50 percent more clean, renewable, emission-free electric power for 25-30 percent less cost.

Unlike five years ago, the biggest costs associated with installing solar electric systems today is not the cost of solar panels. Panel prices have come down more than 50-percent since 2008. Soft costs like permitting, inspections, connecting to the electric grid and workers compensation insurance costs make up the majority of costs for residential solar.

We no longer need cheaper solar panels to lower the cost of solar. We need to cut costs. Chief among them is the cost installers pass on to consumers to run solar projects through the local permit process.

Permitting and inspection policies vary from municipality to municipality sometimes with redundant and needlessly complex processes. These inconsistencies can result in consumers paying far more than is necessary to install what's become cookie-cutter solar systems.

SolarConnecticut and its members began working with the Connecticut Green Bank (formerly CEFIA) and municipal leaders across Connecticut to come up with a streamlined permit process. The result is the Connecticut Rooftop Solar PV Permitting Guide. HB 6435 is based on recommendations from this guide. HB 6435 also includes best practices included in forward-thinking California and Vermont state laws supported by top municipal elected officials there who see a streamlined residential solar permit process as saving municipalities money. In fact, cities and counties that have streamlined their permitting, report a 50% decrease in the amount of staff time needed to process the permit applications. Those cost savings are passed on to consumers lessening the need for ratepayer support.

A streamlined process is critical to Connecticut. Solar installations doubled the past three years in a row. Governor Malloy is supporting 2015 legislation that would bring on an additional 300MW of residential solar by 2020 meaning another 30,000 homeowners will install solar energy systems in the coming years. We can save those homeowners as much as \$15M or more in permit fees with the passage of HB 6435.

Due to the importance being placed on residential solar, it's fair to say that the implementation of consistent statewide standards to achieve timely and cost-effective installation of solar energy systems is a matter of statewide concern and that obstacles to their use should be minimized.

Local permitting and inspection of small solar systems cannot be avoided, but they can be streamlined. Streamlining small, now common, home solar systems is the purpose of this bill proposal. State lawmakers in California and Vermont have achieved cost savings for consumers in those states with streamlined municipal permit/inspection processes.

It's also worth noting that Connecticut's Acting State Building Official supports a simplified application process for commonly installed residential solar systems.

SolarConnecticut members who install solar in multiple states say they pass on to consumers workers compensation costs that are 30-50 percent or more higher than in other states. We're working with state Insurance officials to address this cost. We've presented a proposal to the electric utility companies to lower the consumers paid to connect their systems to the electric grid. No response yet. The Green Bank has agreed to consider changes in the process installers go through to access the incentive programs. We're working to cut costs.

If it is state policy to encourage the use of solar electric systems -- and it is -- it should also be state policy to reduce installed costs that the state controls.

On SB 730, 25 states have laws in place dating back more than 5 years, that protect homeowners' rights to install solar electric power.

Arizona has a law that stipulates that a homeowners association may not prohibit the installation or use of solar-energy devices (panels and associated devices).

Delaware law enacted bans private covenants (i.e., homeowner's association rules) restricting the use of solar energy systems on residential rooftops. The law specifically prohibits any "covenant, restriction, or condition contained in a deed, contract or other legal instrument which affects the transfer, sale or any other interest in real property that prohibits or unreasonably restricts the owner of the property from using a roof mounted system for obtaining solar energy on his or her property.

Massachusetts also prohibits restrictions on solar devices, voiding "any provision in an instrument relative to the ownership or use of real property which purports to forbid or unreasonably restrict the installation or use of a solar energy system ... or the building of structures that facilitate the collection of solar energy."

The issue of interfering with or preventing installation of solar photovoltaic systems in home associations has been discussed and put to rest in American's most active solar states. There has been no lasting negative impact. In this respect, Connecticut stands largely alone.

P.O. Box 515 · Higganum, CT 06441 · www.solarconnecticut.org · 860-345-7449 · mtrahan@solarconnecticut.org

Shaiken, Benjamin

From: Michael Trahan <trahanm@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 11:39 AM
To: ETTestimony
Subject: related documents to HB 6435
Attachments: AB 2188 (Muratsuchi) - Fact Sheet.pdf; AB 2188 signing release final.pdf; City of San Francisco Support AB2188 .pdf; Oakland Chamber Support AB 2188.pdf; Mayor of Richmond.dat; Mayor of Oakland.dat

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Attached are several documents that I wish to present to the Energy & Technology Committee as testimony in support of Hb 6435. The attached documents describe the California solar permit streamline law from which HB 6435 was drafted.

The documents include:

- an outline of the proposed CA bill
- business group support for the bill
- municipal leadership support for the bill

Thank you.

Mike

Michael Trahan, Executive Director
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Assembly Bill 2188 (Muratsuchi) Solar Permitting Efficiency Act

SUMMARY

AB 2188 requires local governments to adopt a solar ordinance that creates a streamlined permitting process for small residential rooftop solar systems that meet certain building and safety standards.

By improving the efficiency of solar permitting statewide, AB 2188 will help lower the cost of solar installations and further expand the accessibility of solar to more California homeowners who want to control their electricity bills and generate their own clean energy. In addition, making solar energy more affordable will help the state reach its renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals, and create more jobs¹ while maintaining the safety of solar energy systems.

BACKGROUND

In 1978, the Legislature adopted the CA Solar Rights Act (Gov. Code section 65850.5 et seq.) and declared that the *"implementation of consistent statewide standards to achieve the timely and cost-effective installation of solar energy systems is not a municipal affair...but is instead a matter of statewide concern."* However, since this time, there has been no effective implementation of this decades-old mandate.

Currently, California's solar permitting structure is a patch work of various regulations and requirements that vary from city to city and county to county. This results in a lack of certainty and hinders the ability of companies to scale and reduce costs. Requirements in one city can differ drastically from a neighboring city even though the same solar systems are being installed on similar homes.

As the price of solar equipment has decreased due to economies of scale, more Californians across the economic spectrum are going solar.² However, despite

¹ According to the U.S. Department of Energy, achieving the SunShot Initiative's \$.06 per kWh goal would lead to the creation of 390,000 new solar jobs by 2050;

http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/mission_vision_goals.html.

² According to the CPUC, the number of solar systems installed in middle income zip codes — with median incomes between \$50,000 and \$75,000 — Last Updated 29-Jul-14

significant declines in equipment prices, the "soft costs" of installation, including permitting and interconnection, continue to be a barrier to greater solar adoption and now comprise over 50% of total installation costs (even greater than panel prices).³ These "soft costs" remain much higher than necessary because of inconsistent and often unnecessary permitting and inspection requirements that hinder the industry's efforts to reduce costs in the face of declining incentives and tax credits. By reducing the time and complexity associated with permitting, the cost of going solar can be further reduced, expanding the accessibility of solar to more Californians.

Further, rooftop solar is a cost-effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while growing the economy. A recent UCLA study noted that if solar reached just 5% of roofs in Los Angeles County over 28,000 jobs could be created and carbon dioxide emissions reduced by 1.25 million tons, the equivalent of removing 225,000 cars.⁴

Entities such as the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory⁵, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)⁶, and the California Office of Planning and Research⁷ have all recognized the need to simplify permitting requirements in order to reduce the barriers to increased clean energy generation. In fact, as part of its Rooftop Solar Challenge program, the DOE has awarded \$12 million to an initiative that empowers local governments across the nation to make it easier, cheaper, and faster for more Americans to go solar.

Several jurisdictions, such as the City of Los Angeles, San

has increased 445% since 2007. CPUC, June 2012. CA Solar Initiative Annual Program Assessment.

³ See footnote #1.

⁴ J.R. DeShazo, Callahn, and Wong, 2014. "Los Angeles Solar and Efficiency Report" UCLA Luskin Center.

⁵ R. Wisler and C. Dong, 2013. "The Impact of City-level Permitting Processes on Residential PV Installation Prices and Development Times." Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

⁶ See U.S. Department of Energy's SunShot Initiative: http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/permitting_interconnection_inspection_costs.html

⁷ opr.ca.gov/docs/California_Solar_Permitting_Guidebook.pdf



Assembly Bill 2188 (Muratsuchi) Solar Permitting Efficiency Act

Jose, Richmond, Oakland, and San Diego County have already developed streamlined permitting requirements for small residential projects that meet certain criteria. These local governments have demonstrated that the state can reduce permitting timeframes while maintaining important safety protections.

NEED FOR THE BILL

It is time for California to make meaningful progress on the goals first adopted by the Legislature in 1978. If the state is serious about encouraging its citizens to reduce carbon emissions by generating clean energy, adopting efficient statewide solar permitting standards to minimize costly permit requirements would be a significant step forward. AB 2188 will help save local governments' scarce resources while also ensuring necessary consumer protections. It will modernize the permitting process by allowing web-based or electronic submission and processing. Modernizing permitting processes can reduce the price of an average residential solar system by \$1000 or more and reduce development time by 30 days.⁸ AB 2188 will also trigger an increase in local investments, which will result in job creation, higher tax revenues and local economic development.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

Specifically, AB 2188 would:

- Require all local governments to adopt a solar ordinance that creates a streamlined permitting process for small residential rooftop solar systems that meet certain building and safety standards.
- Require all local governments to approve the permit application of solar systems that meet the specified criteria upon receipt and review of a completed application.
- Require local governments to provide a single coordinated inspection, if multiple inspections are required, but allows an additional inspection from

fire officials, if they do not have an agreement with the local building department.

- Provide for electronic submittal for all solar installations that qualify for the streamlined permit process.

SUPPORT

California Solar Energy Industry Association (CalSEIA)
California Center for Sustainable Energy
SolarCity
SunRun
Verengo Solar
Solar City
San Francisco Environment Commission
Mayor Jean Quan - City of Oakland
Solar Energy Industries Association
Horizon Solar Power
Real Good Solar
One Block off the Grid
Gayle McLaughlin – Mayor of Richmond
Tom Bates- Mayor of Berkeley
Sierra Club California
Environment California
Environmental Defense Fund
California League of Conservation Voters
Sungevity, Inc.
Brightline Defense Project
Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
TerraVerde Renewable Partners
Marin Clean Energy
Aztec Solar, Inc.
Sierra Pacific Home & Comfort, Inc.
Skyline Innovations
Sun Light & Power
Sullivan Solar Power
Presente.Org
Clean Power Finance
Rising Sun Energy
Sonoma Clean Power
1st Light Energy
Arise Solar
ASI Hastings, Inc.
BMC Solar

⁸ R. Wiser and C. Dong, 2013. "The Impact of City-level Permitting Processes on Residential PV Installation Prices and Development Times." Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.
Last Updated 29-Jul-14



Assembly Bill 2188 (Muratsuchi) Solar Permitting Efficiency Act

Booth Construction
Chico Electric
Clean Solar
Cobalt Power Systems
Cosmic Solar
Delta Solar Electric, Inc.
Enphase Energy
FAFCO, Inc.
Freedom Solar
HeliPower
Home Energy Systems, Inc.
Hot Purple Energy
Insoltech Solar
Luminati
Real Goods Solar
Renova Energy Corp.
Solar Census
Solar Roof Dynamics
Solar Universe, Inc.
SolarCraft
Spectrum Energy Development, Inc.
Stellar Solar
Sun Pacific Solar Electric, Inc.
Suncrest Solar
Unique Solar
Westcoast Solar Energy
Zep Solar

CONTACTS

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(916) 319-2066
Brett.williams@asm.ca.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 24, 2014

CONTACT: Melissa Uribe (310)
316-2164 or Bernadette Del Chiaro
(916) 765-3224 (mobile)

SOLAR WORKERS, BUSINESSES, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS CELEBRATE SIGNING OF STREAMLINED SOLAR PERMITTING BILL

**Governor Brown Signs AB 2188 (Muratsuchi) Cutting Byzantine Solar Rooftop
Permitting Procedures For Homeowners, Growing Local Businesses**

TORRANCE – Hardhat-wearing solar installers, local business leaders, and elected officials gathered at the Torrance Chamber of Commerce today to celebrate the signing of a bill to streamline permitting for residential rooftop solar energy systems. Assembly Bill 2188, by Torrance Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, will cut “red tape” permitting procedures in over five hundred cities and counties statewide promising to lower costs for homeowners and grow local solar businesses.

“AB 2188 will cut bureaucratic regulations to lower the cost of residential solar energy, create solar jobs, and support California’s fight against climate change,” said Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (D–Torrance), author of the bill. “This new law will help California homeowners go solar to reduce their electricity bills and achieve energy independence. In short, AB 2188 is good for consumers, good for jobs, and good for the environment.”

In much the same way as cell phones a decade ago, the price of solar has fallen 50% since 2006 mainly due to economies of scale in manufacturing. However, the “soft costs” of solar, including the cost of getting a permit from a local building department, remains stubbornly high.

“It takes us one day to install a residential solar system yet in many cities and counties it takes months just to get a simple permit,” said Randy Bishop, CEO of Verengo Inc., a leading solar installation company based in Torrance. “Thanks to this bill, that bureaucratic burden should lighten, allowing us to deploy more solar and employ more people.”

Research has shown that costs associated with attaining a building permit for a residential solar energy system can be significant. A study by the Lawrence Berkeley National Labs concluded that

streamlining the permitting process could reduce the price of a typical home solar system by \$1,000 or more, which, in turn, promises to increase demand for solar thereby growing local businesses.

“This is an historic bill for the solar industry,” said Bernadette Del Chiaro, executive director of the California Solar Energy Industries Association (CALSEIA). “California has now become the first state in the nation to mandate a standardized, streamlined permitting practice for residential solar and bring permitting into the 21st Century benefitting consumer, contractor, and cities, alike.”

Approximately 158,000 solar roofs were installed on California homes in 2013, double the number from 2012. The growth in homeowners going solar, fueled by financial incentives and a desire to cut energy bills, has led to a backlog of work at local permitting offices. Advocates of AB 2188 point out that streamlining the permitting process for solar not only helps homeowners but also cuts workloads for cash-strapped building departments.

“Streamlined permitting for rooftop solar just makes sense for everyone involved,” said Torrance Mayor Pat Furey, which has already adopted a streamlined permitting procedure. “Local governments run more smoothly with practical tried and true efficiency measures to the permitting system such as those contained in AB 2188.”

AB 2188 was sent to the governor’s desk at the end of August after enjoying strong bi-partisan support throughout the legislative session. The bill was supported by a coalition of business associations, solar companies, environmental groups, and local elected officials.

The new legislation mandates that every city and county in California adopt a standardized, streamlined permitting practice via ordinance by September 30, 2015, including the following:

- “Substantial conformity” with the updated Solar Permitting Guidebook published by the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, which lays out best practices for permitting and inspection of rooftop solar systems and contains standardized permit application forms. Best practices include timely turn around for permit review and scheduling inspections.
- Required use of the Internet for posting permitting documents and for the acceptance of permit applications, including electronic signatures where necessary.
- Eliminate multiple inspections requiring just one inspection after the system is installed.
- Tighter restrictions on the barriers put in place by Homeowner Associations.

AB 2188 will go into effect January 1, 2015. More information on AB 2188 can be found on the [CALSEIA website](#).

1 **[Resolution in Support of AB 2188 – Solar Energy: Permits]**

2
3 **Resolution supporting a simpler and more efficient California statewide permitting**
4 **process for rooftop solar systems and to help advance San Francisco’s Renewable**
5 **Energy and Climate Change goals.**

6 WHEREAS, In recent years, the City and County of San Francisco has both
7 encouraged the development of innovative distributed generation technology and prioritized
8 the widespread adoption of solar power as a renewable energy resource through programs
9 such as GoSolar SF.

10 WHEREAS, Rooftop solar energy is a leading renewable energy technology that will
11 help this state reach its energy and environmental goals.

12 WHEREAS, To reach San Francisco’s Renewable Energy and Climate Change goals
13 thousands of additional rooftop solar energy systems will need to be deployed in coming
14 years.

15 WHEREAS, To reach the state’s Million Solar Roofs goal, hundreds of thousands of
16 additional rooftop solar energy systems will need to be deployed in the coming years.

17 WHEREAS, Various studies, including one by the Lawrence Berkeley National
18 Laboratory, show that, despite the 1978 California Solar Rights Act, declaring that the
19 “implementation of consistent statewide standards to achieve the timely and cost-effective
20 installation of solar energy systems is not a municipal affair...but is instead a matter of
21 statewide concern”, the permitting process governing the installation of rooftop solar energy
22 systems varies widely across jurisdictions and, contrary to the intent of the law, is both an
23 “obstacle” to the state’s clean energy and greenhouse reduction goals and a burdensome
24 “cost” to homeowners, businesses, schools, and public agencies.

1 WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Energy, through its SunShot Initiative, has
2 distributed millions of dollars in grants to local and state governments, including California
3 jurisdictions, and nonprofit organizations to reduce the costs of distributed solar through more
4 efficient and standardized permitting.

5 WHEREAS, A modernized and standardized permitting process for installations of
6 small-scale solar distributed generation technology on residential rooftops will increase the
7 deployment of solar distributed generation, reduce the cost of solar distributed generation,
8 help to expand access to lower income households, improve the ability of San Francisco and
9 California' to reach their Clean Energy and Climate Change goals, and generate much
10 needed jobs in San Francisco and across the state, all while maintaining safety standards.

11 WHEREAS, Residential rooftop solar energy systems have become far more uniform
12 than in years past, enabling a standardized permitting process for the vast majority of permit
13 seekers.

14 WHEREAS, San Francisco already has one of the most efficient and standardized
15 permitting processes for rooftop solar in the state.

16 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Commission on the Environment strongly
17 supports efforts to establish a statewide standard for issuance of permits for rooftop solar
18 energy installations, and strongly supports AB2188 (Muratsuchi), the residential solar
19 permitting bill; and be it,

20 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Commission on the Environment
21 strongly supports the efforts to standardize rooftop solar permitting and inspections
22 throughout the state; and be it,

23 FURTHER RESOLVED, That San Francisco should continue to work to improve our
24 own permitting procedures and inspection timelines in conjunction with the state and other
25 permitting jurisdictions; and be it,

1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission Secretary is directed to send a copy of
2 this resolution to the State Legislation Committee, urging the State Legislation Committee to
3 support AB2188 (Muratsuchi).

4 I hereby certify that this Resolution was adopted at the Commission on the
5 Environment's Meeting on April 9, 2014.

6 *Monica Fish*

7
8 *Monica Fish, Commission Secretary*

9
10 VOTE: 4-0 Approved; 3 Absent

11 AYES: Commissioners Arce, Josefowitz, Gravanis and Wald

12 NOES: None

13 ABSENT: Commissioners King, Stephenson and Wan

April 18, 2014



The Honorable Al Muratsuchi
California State Assembly
California State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 2188 (Muratsuchi) – SUPPORT

Dear Asm. Muratsuchi:

On behalf of the Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (OMCC), the leading business advocacy organization for Oakland and the greater metropolitan area of the East Bay, I am writing to express my strong support for AB 2188.

AB 2188 brings together best practices from solar permitting procedures currently used throughout the state to create a streamlined process for the permitting of small residential solar systems. A streamlined permitting process for stock installation of rooftop solar will improve the affordability and deployment of these systems. This in turn will provide many benefits to the state, including job creation, energy savings, and help achieving our climate goals.

The OMCC is the leading Oakland business organization, with over 900 members and 2,000 affiliates. We work to advocate for business-friendly policies that are sustainable, progressive, and drive economic development. The Oakland Chamber has numerous members in the energy space including Sungevity, which is a member of our Board, and employs over 400 in Oakland.

The current patchwork nature of permitting for the installation of rooftop solar is an impediment to further deployment of solar systems and adds unnecessary costs. The time delays and procedural variations associated with many jurisdictions keeps the overall price of solar higher than it should be, limiting additional consumers from accessing and installing solar.

Several jurisdictions throughout California, such as Los Angeles, San Diego County, and Oakland through the East Bay Green Corridor partnership, to name just a few, have developed procedures to issue permits electronically or in an over-the-counter manner, allowing installers to quickly and efficiently acquire a permit and install the solar energy system.

We are pleased to support AB 2188 and thank you for your leadership on this issue. This bill will help spur the solar industry, create new jobs and stimulate the economy while helping the state reach its renewable energy goals.

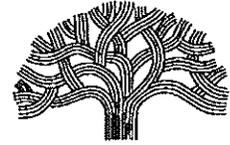
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Barbara Leslie'.

Barbara Leslie
President and CEO

cc: Sen. Loni Hancock
Asm. Rob Bonta
Asm. Nancy Skinner

CITY OF OAKLAND



1 FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA · 3RD FLOOR · OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Office of the Mayor
Jean Quan
Mayor

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April 10, 2014

The Honorable Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi
Capitol Office:
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0066

RE: AB 2188 (Muratsuchi) – **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Muratsuchi,

On behalf of the City of Oakland, I am writing to express my support for AB 2188 (Muratsuchi) conceptually.

AB 2188 brings together best practices from solar permitting procedures currently used throughout the state to create a streamlined process for the permitting of small residential solar systems. A streamlined permitting process for stock installation of rooftop solar will improve the affordability and deployment of these systems. This in turn will provide many benefits to the state, including job creation, energy savings, and help achieve our climate goals.

Oakland, one of the top green cities in the nation, already has a self-certification process for residential solar. As a member of the East Bay Green Corridor, Oakland worked with its neighboring jurisdictions to standardize solar permitting requirements to create a fair and consistent process for permit applicants to help stimulate residential solar installation.

The current patchwork nature of permitting for the installation of rooftop solar is an impediment to further deployment of solar systems and adds unnecessary costs to this still emerging technology. The time delays and procedural variations associated with many local jurisdictions can increase the cost and presents a mitigatable barrier of going solar.

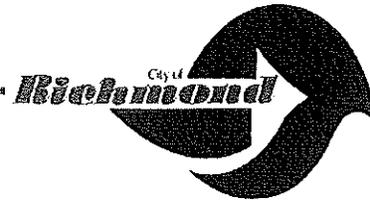
AB 2188 will ensure safety and consumer protections while at the same time ask local governments to quickly and efficiently issue permits for the installation of rooftop solar. Further, AB 2188 will help shorten the wait period between when a solar system is installed and when an inspection can take place.

I am pleased to support AB 2188 and thank you for your leadership on this issue. This bill will help spur the solar industry, create new jobs and stimulate the economy while helping the state and the City of Oakland reach its renewable energy goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Quan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jean Quan
Mayor of Oakland



The Honorable Al Muratsuchi
California State Assembly
California State
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 2188 (Muratsuchi) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly member Muratsuchi,

I am writing to express my support for AB 2188 to expedite and standardized permitting for small residential solar systems. Solar power is a bright spot in our economy, bringing local jobs to the urban environment and helping cities meet their clean energy and environmental goals. Efforts to reduce the cost of solar power and enable more people to invest in it should be a top priority for the state and for our cities.

The City of Richmond has embraced solar power for a number of years through several initiatives, including participation in the East Bay Green Corridor. Reducing costs associated with the installation of rooftop solar power is a key driver to getting more homeowners and businesses in our city to invest in this promising technology.

AB 2188 helps reduce the time, energy and costs associated with the permitting of rooftop solar systems by improving the efficiency of the permitting process for small residential solar systems. An improved efficiency will not only alleviate some of the financial weight faced by the consumer, but will generate green job opportunities for our residents.

In addition to being good for the solar industry and the solar consumer, streamlined permitting is also good for the city. By adopting a more efficient, streamlined permitting procedure for small residential solar projects, Richmond also saves scarce resources as we face a rising number of permit applications.

AB 2188 ensures safety and consumer protections while allowing local governments too quickly and efficiently issue permits for the installation of rooftop solar. This, in turn, will create green job opportunities and help cities and the state reach our clean energy and environmental goals. I am pleased to support AB 2188.

Sincerely,


Gayle McLaughlin

Mayor, City of Richmond